

S.24

An act relating to naming the Courthouse located at 9 Merchants Row in Rutland

The House proposes to the Senate to amend the bill by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; RACIAL EQUITY AND
BIAS; PLAN AND REPORT

(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

(1) the State's Department of Corrections is a department within the Agency of Human Services with the stated purpose in 28 V.S.A. § 1 of developing and administering a rehabilitative correctional program designed, in part, to "render treatment to offenders with the goal of achieving their successful return and participation as citizens of the State and community" and to "foster their human dignity."

(2) The Department of Corrections does not serve in a law enforcement capacity but does play an important role in implementing the quality of an individual's sentence and ability for a successful return to and participation in the community.

(3) The Department's role is to also provide security and ensure racial and social equity to employees and to persons under the custody of the Commissioner.

(b) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly:

(1) to address systemic racism and bias to achieve racial and social equity for employees of the Department of Corrections and persons under the custody of the Commissioner;

(2) to recruit, train, and retain a diverse and high-quality workforce in the Department; and

(3) to enhance a human services approach to the State correctional program that will require the Department of Corrections to undertake a thorough review and revision of its policies, administrative directives, and interim procedures and memos.

(c) Plan. The Commissioner of Corrections shall develop a strategy and long-term plan to address systemic racism, bias, and diversity and inclusion in the Department of Corrections.

(1) The scope of the plan shall address the Department's employment practices and supervision of persons under the custody of the Commissioner both in State facilities and in the community.

(2) The plan shall include a timeline and process for the following:

(A) evaluating Department hiring practices, training, supervision, professional development, and competency standards to inform the basis of performance evaluation and promotion of employees;

(B) identifying the resources and funding needed to complete the plan, including upgraded technology, consultant support, and required data;
and

(C) identifying a list of stakeholders and a process for how the Department will engage with the Department's employees, the persons under the custody of the Commissioner, and the broader community.

(d) Report. On or before January 15, 2021, the Commissioner of Corrections shall submit a report on the strategy and long-term plan described in subsection (c) of this section, and the timeline for the implementation of the plan, to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to a report on racial equity and bias in the Department of Corrections"